



### **Inner Growth - Disciple**

**Discipline** - Job 36:10

**Intercession** - Jeremiah 27:18

**Souls** - Acts 14:22

**Commandments** - 1 John 2:3

**Inner man (Holy Spirit)** - 2 Corinthians 4:16, Ephesians 3:16

**Persecution** - 2 Timothy 3:12

**Love** - 1 Peter 4:8

**Endurance (faith)** - Matthew 24:13

What does it take to be a disciple? A disciple is widely known to be a follower, a believer, and a devotee. However, to be one is to follow Jesus by His Word throughout life. Still, a disciple from a spiritual perspective has a responsibility to uphold if they desire to be in Christ. Similarly, like marriage, the spouse must abide by the vows to keep the relationship strong and stable. A disciple involves action and not only speaking and reciting but being a doer of the Word, especially in obedience under the guidance of a dedicated servant of God.

A disciple consists of several characteristics that must be within to become one. The person must control themselves, avoid creating issues, and engage in unnecessary conversation that would cause fault or blame. Pray without ceasing by interceding for the unbelievers

that they come to know God, speaking to Him through prayer internally and externally. Concerning the lives of unbelievers by constantly praying for loved ones, neighbors, co-workers, strangers we encounter, and even our enemies because they do not realize or understand that God is real. Another characteristic is the Ten Commandments, especially the personal ones.

Other notables are communication with the Holy Spirit, who is a person: a further explanation through proof of the scriptures later. The disciple will experience affliction: overcoming the physical nature and others; the enemy may use this against God's people. God is love, and disciples must have that from God to develop into one. Finally, the last and most significant is faith: to remain a disciple.

Becoming a disciple takes discipline. The relative words associated with this are control, development, practice, self-restraint, and will. All these must be in the person who wants to become one: The difference between the disciple and discipline is the letter word "in." The help and calling upon God to enable those who desire to be one is not by flesh effort. Jesus, the Son of God, did not rely upon Himself but through the Father.

Matthew eleven, verses twenty-five through twenty-seven, Jesus reveals the Father. "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."

Becoming a disciple requires intercession: A believer who serves the Lord by interceding for the people around their environment or anywhere in the world.

Intercession is "standing in the gap" for something or someone by lifting the needs and concerns of God in prayer.

Intercession happens when we reach beyond ourselves and our needs in prayer, an expression of agape, or selfless, love. When we feel a burden for someone else, we can be encouraged to bring that to the Lord, stand on their behalf, and seek His Will for their lives. Intercession is becoming a watchman in prayer: the awareness of a need for others and presenting before the Lord on their behalf.

Genesis chapter eighteen, verses sixteen through thirty-three, Abraham pleads for Sodom., and begins his request to God. In verse twenty-two, regarding the righteous in this city, Abraham believed and stood before the Lord for the few godly people who needed sparing. He asks the Lord several times if anyone righteous in Sodom will receive pardon during his conversation. During Abraham's request, he did not ask anything on his behalf while petitioning for the godly people in Sodom. Abraham risks his relationship with God for the potential of not being so great for the sake of the people.

Becoming a disciple is about helping others' souls. Leading them to salvation by living for God before Him and them, giving help to those around us in their time of need, such as counseling the churchgoers to become believers, and to fellowship and aid other believers with their endeavors concerning the kingdom of God. All these different people are souls that a disciple must be mindful of and careful to treat well. The presentation of a disciple can turn them to God or away from Him. However, not all will come to Christ. Even though the disciple lives a clean life before the public, humans freely have the opportunity to accept or reject Him.

John the Baptist demonstrates how to care for the souls of God, who created

man in His image. Matthew three, verse one, begins with the servant of God preaching in the wilderness. John the Baptist, using the Word of God, did get the attention of unbelievers. However, his preaching did get the attention of the Pharisees and Sadducees, the two of the most prominent religious groups in Judaism. John the Baptist looks beyond the outside to the inside, which is the soul: His mission was to convert the minds through the Word of God.

Becoming a disciple begins with keeping the commandments. To become one goes beyond the list of faithfully honoring the ten in Exodus twenty, verses three, four, seven, eight, twelve, thirteen through seventeen, respectively. To learn and devote our attention to what the Lord says daily through His Word. Obedience requires activity, which means not only to agree but to be a doer of it. The difference between true believers and churchgoers is keeping and exercising what God says. Abraham, in Genesis twenty-six, verse five, was commended by God. He appears to Isaac and instructs him not to go to Egypt. Then, rerouting the Son of Abraham to another direction. God shows Isaac the importance of obedience. He lifts and reminds Abraham's eldest of the sincere effort of which his father kept the laws and commandments. And because of this example, God shows Isaac how He will bless him like his father, Abraham. To maintain disciple status with God requires the inner being, the Holy Spirit. Our Heavenly Father speaks and works with the inner person even though He is the maker of the outer being. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." The tendency to focus on the physical part instead of the inner is common. However, we must realize that the earthly shell will be left behind while the inner person will be the being that will live eternally.

Today, many counterfeits claim they hear God and say He spoke to them with the show of their hand to their ear. Only not to realize that God speaks to the inner spirit: deep within, nowhere near the physical ear, but a spiritual one, our spirit. Disciples know His voice and where it comes from when living for God. Holy Spirit will not dwell with those who contaminate their lives with sin. Darkness and light do not mix. Either the ungodly spirit or the godly one will enter. Do you know which one is present within you today?

To be a disciple will undergo persecution. In the gospel of John, Jesus, the Son of God, while on earth, went through mistreatment. He is the one who chose his twelve disciples. Our Lord warned his disciples to prepare for persecution. They were to avoid all things which gave advantage to their enemies. All meddling with worldly or political concerns, all appearance of evil or selfishness, and all underhand measures. Christ foretold troubles that might not surprise them but that they might confirm their faith.

He tells them what they should suffer and from whom. Still, Christ has dealt fairly and faithfully with us in telling us the worst we can meet with in his service. He would have us deal with ourselves in sitting down and counting the cost. Persecutors are worse than beasts in that they prey upon those of their kind. The strongest bonds of love and duty have often enmity against Christ.

Sufferings from friends and relations are very grievous; nothing cuts more. It appears that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution, and we must expect to enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations. These predictions of trouble are counsels and comforts for a time of trial. The disciples of Christ are hated and persecuted as serpents, and their ruin is sought. Disciples need wisdom from God. Be ye harmless as doves.

Not only does nobody hurt, but bare nobody ill will. Prudent care there must be, but not an anxious, perplexing thought. Let this care be upon God. The disciples of Christ must think more how to do well than how to speak well. In case of great peril, the disciples of Christ may go out of the way of danger, though they must not go out of the way of duty. No sinful or unlawful means may be in use to escape. For then, it is not a door of God's opening. The fear of man brings a snare of perplexity that disturbs our peace. An entangling snare by which fatigue into sin, and, therefore, it must be striven and prayed against. Tribulation, distress, and persecution cannot take away God's love for them or theirs to him. Fear Him, who can destroy both soul and body in hell. They must deliver their message publicly, for all are deeply concerned with the gospel.

The whole counsel of God in Acts twenty, verse twenty-seven, in Christ shows them why they should be of good cheer. Their sufferings were against those who opposed his gospel. When God calls us to speak for him, we may depend on him to teach us what to say. A believing prospect at the end of our troubles will support us under them. They may be borne to the end because the sufferers shall come under them.

All who believe the truth will come up to the price and make everything else yield to it. Christ will lead us through suffering to glory with him. Those are best prepared for the life that sits most loose to this present life. Though the kindness done to Christ's disciples is ever so small, there will be occasion for it. Christ does not say that they deserve a reward, for we cannot merit anything from the hand of God, but they shall receive a reward from the gift of God.

To become a disciple of Jesus Christ involves loving others. The great commandment in Matthew twenty-two,

verses thirty-four through forty, requires followers to love the people around them. However, this charity Jesus talks about comes in two parts: First is to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and mind. The second is to love our neighbor like ourselves.

Do we know what the Son of God is asking us to do? Do we understand how we are to do this part?

First of all, the nature of God is love. He gave his only Son to redeem us from sin, which involves a lot of unloving things. So, if we do not love, how can we be a part of the family of God? Imagine an unloving family member: The difficult to trust and function under the same roof because we would not feel comfortable but the opposite. That means we could not be together, and that is what we demonstrate to God if we do not love others. Let us boldly confess Christ and show love to him in all things.

The difference between the Ten and Great Commandments is one set is law, and the other is life.

If a follower does not love, which is the nature of God, then the person will not be able to keep the other commandments. First Corinthians thirteen sums up how a disciple should love God and others. Love is not about things but the Creator that created all things. Shows patience, endures suffering while being kind, not prideful, has no bad attitude, does not get angry, unhappy living in sin but walking in truth, and continues to believe and perseveres.

To be a disciple comes down to our faith. Without it, it will be impossible to continue, let alone to please God. To endure to the end will be the ones that will continue to stand with God. Habakkuk two, verse four, says the righteous will sustain while living for God. However, the unjust will waiver and eventually depart from the faith. The children of God are to endure and not depend on what they visually see, which

differs from those who stay on course walking the narrow way, not resorting back to the broad way of life.

Today, believers must put their faith in God and not in themselves. Hebrew eleven, verses one through thirty-nine, give examples of people sustaining faith and receiving results. However, some did not receive the promise yet still live by faith until the end, as in verse thirteen of this chapter. A believer who reads the Word of God, receives, believes, speaks, and prays to God about it will eventually build their faith. To endure will require patience. To endure will require work because faith without works is dead. The examples in Hebrews eleven demonstrate activity on behalf of the people involved. By faith in verse thirty of Hebrews eleven, Jericho's walls fell after seven days. The Israelites had to endure each day with patience until the final day when God, by their faith, did His part to give them victory over their enemies.

What does it take to be a disciple of Jesus Christ? Total dependence on God for someone to become and remain one until the end. The disciplining of ourselves, praying and interceding for others, keeping the commandments, and relying on the Holy Spirit to help us. Overcoming persecution, having love for others around us, and having faith to sustain us is the only way to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. The Son of God demonstrates that while on earth, so shall we if we desire to become one of His.